
Law360 Names WilmerHale Among 2012 Pro Bono Firms of the Year

2012-09-20

WilmerHale's commitment to pro bono earned the firm a feature place in the *Law360* Pro Bono Firms of the Year series. This year, 20 law firms, including WilmerHale, were honored in the *Law360* series for achieving the most notable pro bono wins.

Among this year's pro bono wins, WilmerHale was recognized for its partnership with the Massachusetts Attorney General in defeating the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in the First Circuit. The firm was also recognized for its work in advancing the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011.

The DOMA case was one of the most visible pro bono cases of 2012.

WilmerHale Partner [Mark Fleming](#) worked closely with the Massachusetts Attorney General to secure a unanimous ruling by the First Circuit holding that the federal Defense of Marriage Act—which defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman for purposes of all federal law—is unconstitutional by denying federal economic and other benefits to same-sex couples who are legally married in the state and to surviving same-sex spouses. The decision marks the first federal appeals court to rule DOMA as unconstitutional.

In addition to WilmerHale's pro bono litigation work, the firm regularly works on unconventional pro bono cases, including the enactment of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act. In this case, the firm represented five returned Peace Corps volunteers who were sexually assaulted during their service. WilmerHale Partner [Reginald Brown](#), Senior Associate [Zachary Beasley](#), and former WilmerHale attorney Natalie Adams led the firm's team to gather evidence of longstanding, systemic weaknesses in the Peace Corps' sexual assault prevention and response policies. The legislation enacted historic reforms to the Peace Corps' policies for the prevention of sexual assault and for assistance to the victims of sexual assault during their volunteer service. It also established a sexual assault advisory council and required the agency to track the incidents of sexual assault.

The firm confirmed its place in the *Law360* series by maintaining its honorable record of public service and community involvement. As measured by the *American Lawyer*, *Washington Business Journal*, *Boston Business Journal* and many others, the firm's pro bono program continuously ranks as one of the top in the country. Within the past year, WilmerHale developed its body of gratis work, exceeding the five percent billable-hour-equivalent benchmark set by the Pro Bono Institute's law firm pro bono challenge.

As quoted by *Law360*, "Our pro bono is very much a part of the DNA of the firm," said [Kim Parker](#), co-chair of the Pro Bono Committee.